

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

November 5, 2001
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Mosher, Deputy Mayor Marshall, Councilmembers Creighton, Davidson, Degginger, Lee, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Marshall opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. and announced recess to executive session for approximately 90 minutes to discuss one item of potential litigation, one item of property acquisition, and one item of pending litigation.

The study session resumed at 7:13 p.m. with Mayor Mosher presiding.

2. Study Session

- (a) Land Use Code Amendment for Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process
Required By State Growth Management Act
(Staff will return on November 19 for Council action on the ordinance.)

City Manager Steve Sarkozy introduced a proposed Land Use Code amendment to clarify the City's procedures and decision criteria for the review of Comprehensive Plan Amendments, clarify public participation procedures, and establish a docket adoption and evaluation process.

Planning Director Dan Stroh introduced Pat Sheffels, former Planning Commission Chair. Ms. Sheffels said the Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed Land Use Code amendments, which will clarify the following steps in the annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process: 1) formal application process, 2) establishment of a docket in order to evaluate CPA suggestions and then make recommendations to Council, 3) review and hearing of CPAs under consideration, and 4) final City Council review. The Planning Commission recommends that a public hearing and recommendation process be added to the overall review program in which each eligible CPA is involved in two public hearings. Ms. Sheffels said the Commission's review was focused on simplifying the process and encouraging greater community participation.

Mr. Stroh said the Growth Management Act requires cities to conduct annual reviews of the Comprehensive Plan and to encourage early and continuous public participation in the process. The proposed Land Use Code amendments regarding the CPA process will provide the following steps:

- CPA applications submitted
- Docket evaluation and hearing activities
- Review and hearing of docketed CPAs
- Final City Council review of all CPAs.

The proposed amendments introduce a new formal application process to ensure sufficient information is submitted in order to evaluate the merits of each CPA. Evaluation criteria will be developed for determining whether suggested CPAs should be selected for a full review. Mr. Stroh said anyone can suggest a non site-specific amendment. Only property owners and their agents will be eligible to suggest site-specific amendments. City Council retains the authority to initiate CPAs as well.

Mr. Stroh said suggested CPAs will be reviewed for docket eligibility. Items considered appropriate for CPA review will be added to the annual work program. Site-specific amendments will be reviewed during even-numbered years only, while policy amendments can be reviewed annually. Mr. Stroh noted that broader issues requiring extensive staff work will be reviewed during the five-year Comprehensive Plan update process, as required by the Growth Management Act.

Mr. Stroh summarized that the purpose of the amendments is to clarify the process, comply with Growth Management Act requirements, and reinforce the role of the Comprehensive Plan as a stable and predictable foundation for land use decisions.

Dr. Davidson feels the process is too lengthy for potential property owners pursuing a CPA and then a rezone on their property.

Mr. Degginger questioned the provision allowing site-specific amendments to be reviewed in even-numbered years only. Mr. Stroh said the Comprehensive Plan is a mature document and should be viewed as the planning foundation for the city. He said it is rare for properties to be assigned the wrong Comprehensive Plan designation. He noted that site-specific CPAs involve significant staff and Planning Commission time as well as the public's time and attention.

In response to Mr. Degginger, Mr. Stroh said the Growth Management Act requires annual docketing of CPA suggestions. Action on CPAs is not required on an annual basis, however, and the two-year schedule for site-specific CPA reviews complies with GMA requirements.

Mr. Lee is in favor of streamlining the process and providing sufficient opportunities for the public to submit suggested CPAs.

In response to Mr. Noble, Mr. Stroh said staff will conduct the initial review of suggested CPAs. The Planning Commission will review all suggested CPAs and provide a recommendation to Council.

Dr. Davidson reiterated his concern regarding the lengthy process. He said if a CPA application is denied, the applicant should be able to submit a revised application representing another option without having to wait two years. He feels the intent of the Growth Management Act is to provide annual opportunities for review.

Mr. Degginger expressed support for the annual review of privately initiated CPAs. Mrs. Marshall concurred with Mr. Degginger. Mr. Creighton shares Dr. Davidson's concerns regarding the CPA schedule.

Mayor Mosher noted Council support for the annual review of all CPAs.

In response to Mr. Lee, Mr. Stroh said the current three-year waiting period between private CPA submittals is in compliance with the Growth Management Act. He said the three-year waiting period was put in place several years ago as a neighborhood protection measure and to ensure some certainty in land use.

Dr. Davidson is opposed to requiring a three-year waiting period for resubmittal when private CPAs are denied. Mr. Degginger is in favor of providing flexibility for applicants. Mr. Lee wants to ensure maximum public access to the process.

Mayor Mosher noted Council consensus in favor of allowing annual submittals of site-specific CPAs and retaining the current requirement that applicants, if denied, must wait three years before resubmitting a new application. Mr. Stroh said staff will return for Council action in two weeks.

(b) 2000 Comparative Cities Performance Report

Mr. Sarkozy said a more detailed discussion of the 2000 Comparative Cities Performance Report will be presented to Council at an upcoming meeting as part of the biennial budget process.

Gary Ameling, Interim Finance Director, said 113 jurisdictions participated in the 2000 Comparative Cities program including four in Washington – Bellevue, Redmond, Seattle, and Vancouver. Burien, Kent, and Lynnwood have recently joined the program and will be included in next year's report. Mr. Ameling noted that Bellevue continues to compare well to other cities. Through its participation in this program, Bellevue has been declared a "Best Practices" city by the International City-County Managers Association (ICMA) and received international recognition.

Rich Siegel, Performance and Outreach Coordinator, said the 2000 findings are similar to the previous year's report. He noted that rates for Bellevue's Part I crimes (violent and property crimes) are the lowest in five years. The Police Department has maintained response times of less than six minutes for life-threatening calls during the past three years. Bellevue's rate for clearing Part I crimes increased in 2000 and was five percent higher than the ICMA average. For Bellevue's Fire Department, the percentage of structure fires contained to the room of origin is significantly higher than the ICMA average. Bellevue's percentage of cardiac arrest patients delivered to a medical facility alive continues to be among the highest in the nation and significantly higher than the ICMA average.

Mr. Siegel said the City's participation in the Comparative Cities program has resulted in the following benefits:

- Shift in police officer deployment to focus on youth services.
- Adoption of auto theft deterrent program.
- Reduction in response times to top priority calls.
- Identification of emergency routes and system improvements to reduce Fire Department response time.
- Improved code compliance procedures to shorten compliance time for nuisance and zoning complaints.
- Ability to contact staff in other cities with similar operations and challenges through a private web site.
- Heightened staff awareness of the role of benchmarking and performance measuring in making decisions.

Mr. Siegel said the next steps are to: 1) continue to encourage more Puget Sound cities to join ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement, 2) continue working with ICMA to refine the data collection process and improve reporting accuracy, 3) continue operational emphasis to reduce juvenile and property crimes, and 4) implement wireless data technology to improve response time by allowing the closest fire apparatus to respond.

Mr. Ameling noted that staff will return next week for further discussion. Mrs. Marshall requested additional information regarding Bellevue's cost for police services compared to other cities and Bellevue's fire inspection statistics.

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Mosher declared recess to the regular session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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